Gannett in New Drive to Elect 'Ja' Congress

CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE HAS BIG ANTI-FDR SLUSH FUND

By ADAM LAPIN

WASHINGTON, May 7.—After a brief eclipse, Frank Gannett's well-heeled Committee for Constitutional Government is attempting a comeback to elect "strong men" to Congress in this year's elections.

First of the committee's immediate objectives as disclosed in its recent literature is:

"To inspire a militant demand in every state and congressional district to send to congress strong and able representatives, Democrats and Republicans alike."

These "strong men" are to be pledged to "resist further encroachments on the Constitution, to recapture emergency powers and restore to congress its constitutional supremacy, its power over the purse, its function to frame legislation and control policy."

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In short, Gannett's outfit is beginning a bi-partisan drive to elect a congress which will further hamper and sabotage the President's conduct of the war.

Gannett, upstate New York publisher who has followed a pretty consistent defeatist line, founded the committee in 1937 to campaign against the President's court reform bill. He is no longer the committee's chairman, but is still one of its directors and leading spirits.

Although the committee has not been in the public eye much in the last few years, it still has available ample funds. It spent $315,292.24 in 1943, and is attempting to raise a much larger sum now for use in this year's elections.

Members of congress, industrialists, bankers and real estate men have been sent an urgent appeal by treasurer Sumner Gerard to make substantial contributions to the committee's election activities.

The committee has also been distributing with its appeal for funds copies of its recent literature including a handsome 48-page pamphlet entitled: "Needed Now—Capacity for Leadership, Courage to Lead."

Emphasis on "leadership" in the committee's published material is reminiscent of much fascist propaganda.

The committee's literature also stresses attacks on "bureaucracy" and on the President's war-time executive powers.

As bait for potential contributors in the upper brackets, the committee is pushing now, despite the need for governmental revenue to prosecute the war, a constitutional amendment to repeal the income tax amendment to the Constitution.

This appeal seems to have been pretty effective. Out of $264,000 in contributions received last year, $145,501, or more than half, were $50 or more.

There were 22 contributors who came through with $26,000 or an average of $1,181.81 each.

Last year the committee printed and distributed 26,456,636 pieces of its anti-Roosevelt literature. Since its inception in 1937, the total is 92,000,000 pieces.

Much of the committee's income is spent on organizing synthetic pressure campaigns on Congress. It has sent 350,000 telegrams "to citizens to arouse them to action on great issues."